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The Future of The New Theatre. ❀



THE NEW, such as founded The New Theatre, are not the kind to accept permanent defeat. To pluck from the nettle of failure the flower of success—that is what may be expected of them. If, as has been announced, they shall lease the present structure and build a smaller theatre, that step alone will do much toward placing the enterprise on a practical basis and, in the end, even serve to recoup what losses may have been occasioned in the original house, so unsuitable to the production of a large and desirable class of plays. Acoustically too the house was a failure, which was the more surprising, because its architects had made a similar unfortunate mistake in a church in St. Augustine and might have been expected to profit from their previous experience.

Presuming that The New Theatre, wherever it is located, will have a stock company, its direction should be entrusted to a manager who knows where to find good actors and good plays and

how to cast the right people in the right roles. A leading man The New Theatre company may be said to have lacked absolutely, and there have been flagrant instances of miscasting. In fact there has been an air of the dilettante about its direction.



A certain rapprochement with the regular producing managers would not be undesirable. Commercial they may be, but after all a production like "Peter Pan," the most delicious bit of stage fantasy since "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and beautifully acted and staged, is an artistic achievement to which one's eyes should not be closed; nor does it stand alone. And those who criticize the successful managers of today, are apt to forget the deplorable condition of the theatrical business before these men came upon the scene. Contracts were made to be broken. Audiences found theatres dark and no performance, because the orchestra or the actors had not been paid. Trains were late in reaching New York, because they were delayed by stranded theatrical companies walking home on the tracks. Not strictly true of course, but this old time theatrical joke illustrates the conditions that prevailed. The regular managers

THE deserve full credit for improving these condi-
LOTUS tions and for placing the theatre upon a sound
business basis. They may have gone to the
other extreme, but that is gradually being
corrected.

The New Theatre may well serve as a further
corrective, provided this is not attempted in a
set, obvious way, but develops spontaneously
as an incident to continued progress toward the
realization of high ideals. It is fortunate that
the enterprise is not to be given up—that The
New Theatre simply is abandoning a structure
not a purpose.

